

Enlightening Minds: Promoting Education through Buddhist Principles in India

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ABSTRACT

The goal of Buddhist education is to transform the personality into the highest form of humanity through moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection. These three abilities which complete human life undoubtedly lead man through worldly happiness to supramundane happiness which is the highest achievement that we all seek equally. Education is taught or expected to shape the character of a society. This article tries to discuss the teachings of Buddhism in ancient India. It is well known that the rise of Buddhism in India ushered in the golden age of Indian culture and civilization. The rise of Buddhism in India led to the establishment of many centers of learning that did not exist before. Buddhist education brought revolutionary changes in society. We still remember the glory of Nalanda University, Vikramshila University, Sonopuri University, Salwan University, Jagadhar University, PanditVihar University, Taxila University etc. This article also emphasizes the important role of Buddhist monasteries in promoting education in India and other Asian countries.

KEYWORDS

- Education • Buddhist Principles India • Enlightenment • Wisdom • Learning
- Cultural Heritage • Holistic Development

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INTRODUCTION

The most important contribution of ancient India is in the field of education, not only to India but to the world. Also remember that education is not an abstract term. It shows itself in cultural, economic, personal, philosophical, scientific, social and spiritual progress. In other words, education is a means of developing the mind for the betterment of individuals and society. Buddha was the founder of Buddhism. It is one of the 11 religions in the world. Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya and became known as Tathagata or Buddha. "Buddha" means scholar, wise, intelligent and "Tathagata" means one who knows the truth. Buddha visualized the current situation and showed people a very moral way of life. Buddhism not only showed the noble path to the people of India, but also spread its brilliance to the whole world. That is why the name of Gautama is still remembered with respect and reverence.

DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION

In the field of education, Buddhists made an amazing contribution. The Buddha began his teaching career wandering home, town, town and street, street. He then founded his education centers in the monasteries such as Veluvanamanrama in Rajagraha, Jetavanarama and Pubbarama in Savathi. Buddhist Sanghas and Viharas served as large education centers. Students reached these places to receive education not only from different parts of India, but also from Tibet and China, etc. Nalanda, Taxila and Vikramshila, who won reputations, since the great educational centers were originally Buddha Viharas only. Nalanda enjoyed a great reputation as an educational center and has been described as the University of Oxford Buddhism. It should be noted that these institutions did not give instructions only in religion, but also in other issues such as secular literature, logic, philosophy, medicines, military science and economy.

AIMS OF BUDDHIST EDUCATION

The goal of Buddhist education is to attain wisdom. In Sanskrit, the language of ancient India, Buddhist wisdom was called "Anuttara-Samyak-Sambhodi", which means perfect

maximum wisdom. The Buddha taught us that the main objective of our practice or culture was to achieve this final wisdom.

1. The main objective of Buddhist education was the entire development of the child's personality. This included its physical, mental, moral and intellectual development.
2. The main objective of Buddhist education is to change a beast reckless to Sabia to priest.
3. The main objective of education was the spread of religion and the inculcation of religious feelings and education served as a means to achieve salvation or Nirvana.

THE NATURE OF MASS EDUCATION

In the early days, Buddhist education was limited to monasteries and monasteries members. But then it opened to all. Buddhist education brought revolutionary changes in society. The monasteries or Hihars Buddha were the main learning centers, and only the Buddhist monks could claim to learn. People generally receive moral and religious education from monks.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION

It appears that women did not occupy the same position as in the Vedic period. It is well known that the Buddha refused to admit women into the Sangha. But after some time, at the insistence of his dear disciple Ananda, the Buddha allowed about 500 women, including his stepmother, to enter the Viharas with many restrictions and reservations. The Buddha Sangha focuses on the cultural and social development of women.

There are bhikkhunis who have very high spiritual knowledge and can influence many people. Many monks also take responsibility for social services. Some of them studied philosophy deeply and became poets and writers. Some of them even study politics and actively participate in the politics of the day. Some of them even went abroad to spread Buddhism. Sheelbhattarika, Prabhudevi and Viyanka were famous as poets and writers at that time. The daughter of Emperor Asoka, Sanghami, was a very famous bhikshuni who provided a great service to Buddhism.

Quality and Responsibilities of Teachers

A teacher must be a monk for at least ten

years and must have purity of character, purity of mind and wealth. The teacher and students of the monastery were responsible. But the teacher is fully responsible for the education of our student monks, clothing, food and accommodation. The teacher is responsible for the treatment whenever the patient is sick. They looked at the all-round development of students. There is a sense of mutual respect between teachers and students. Their relationship was like father and son. The teacher is considered the spiritual father or the intellectual father of the student.

Student Concept

The objective of Buddhist education is to create a free person, a wise, intelligent, moral, non-violent and secular person. The students became judicious, humanists, logical and without superstition. Students have freed themselves from greed, lust and ignorance. Buddhist education was open and available for people from all areas of life. A student was expected to serve his teacher with all devotion. When getting up in the morning, the student organizes everything for the teacher's daily routine. The student had to prepare to learn whenever the teacher asked. The Buddhist system imposes an obligation on the disciple to serve that teacher as part of education.

Admissions

Monasteries were centers for the handover of education during the Buddhist period. To be accepted, the student had to appear in front of the teacher and ask him for lessons. The teacher was fully responsible for the education of his pupil. On the other hand, the student also had to respond to the instructions given by the teacher. The student did not answer to any other Bhikshuka in the monastery at all. Novices first entered the Sangha (BhikkhaSangha), after which they had to follow the monastic rules and the rules of the Sangha. Even today, these rules are followed.

Teaching method

Initially, private and group lessons took place. Later it became a classroom. In due time, the Sangharamas became schools and residential universities. Throughout the history of education, universities have played an important role in promoting Buddhism, Buddhist history, art and culture. The world-famous scholars such as Atisa Dipankar,

Silabrada, Santarakshit were the teachers of the universities. Many valuable books have been written. We still remember the glory of universities such as Nalanda, Vikramsila, Sompouri, Salban, Jagaddal, Pandit Vihar e Taxila. The superiority of these universities had no rival. The students of China, Myanmar, Thailand, Gandhara and all the parts of Ancient India reached these universities. Buddhist education is a combination of individual education and classroom education.

The curriculum was of a spiritual nature. The objective of education was to achieve salvation or nirvana. The teaching method was mainly oral.

These were the following methods:

- Verbal education
- Discussion
- Logic test
- Tours
- Conference
- Meditation in solitude

Six Buddhist universities of ancient India

It is well known that with the emergence of Buddhism in India, there was a golden age of Indian culture and civilization. All aspects of Indian civilization progressed under the influence of Buddhism. Many learning centers have emerged that did not exist before. Buddhist India had six important universities that reached great fame. These six were Nalanda, Vikramashila, Odantapuri, Jagaddala, Somapura and Vallabhi.

Nalanda University

Nalanda is the most famous ancient university in India and its ruins are preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). It is located in Bihar, the ancient land of Magadha. Magadha is known as the birthplace of Buddhism. Nalanda was a prosperous city at the time of Buddha. He visited there on a mission trip. Nalanda University was founded in the early 5th century in present-day Bihar by Shakraditya of the Gupta dynasty and flourished for 600 years until the 12th century.

Nalanda is the first university in the world to have residential areas for students and teachers. He also had a large public hall and three libraries. Students from countries such as Korea, Japan, China, Tibet, Indonesia, Fars

and Türkiye came to study at this university. A clay emblem of the University of Nalanda is exhibited at the AST Museum in Nalanda. We received an integral story from the University of Nalanda of the eminent Chinese scholar Hik Tsang that came to investigate during the reign of HarshaShiladitya. He wrote the famous Buddhist travel trip of the western world “ta tang siyuki” in Chinese. Ai-time (675-685) was also a Chinese monk who came to India and studied in Nalanda. At the time of Fahyeon’s visit, it was a typical Buddhist monastery. The University of Nalanda occupied an area of 30 hectares. Nalanda was blessed with the presence of some of the most eminent personalities in India. Among them were Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Dharmapala, Silahadra and Kamalashila. Most of his works are available in Tibetan and Chinese translations. When Muslim assailants led by BakhtiarKhailiji set fire to MahadaNalanda, the main population perished.

On November 19, 1958, the president of India, Rajendra Prasad, inaugurated the Nava NalandaHahaya near the old university. The Chinese government donated 500,000 rupees to a mausoleum to house these relics. The Muslims brought the idea of the university to the west and, later, the universities emerged in the western world.

Vikramasila

Vikramasila University was founded by Dharmapala of the Pala dynasty in the late 8th century and was located in Florida. Vikramashila University was founded in the late 8th century by Pala’s grandson, Dharmapala and flourished for 400 years until the 12th century. The University of Vikramashila is in the current district of Bhagalpur de Bihar. The University of Vikramashila has provided direct competition to the University of Nalanda with more than 100 teachers and more than 1000 students enrolled in this university. This university is known for its special studies on the subject of Tantra (tantrismo). One of the famous graduates of the University of Vikramashila is Atisa Dipankara, the founder of the Sharma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, which revived Buddhism in Tibet. The era of Dipankara Sri Gna was Vikramashila’s golden age.

Odantapuri

Odantapuri is considered the oldest

university in India. It is located in Magada, 6 km from Nalanda. Acharyasri gang of Vikramashila is here. King Gopala (660-705) was the pattern that helped establish this university. According to Tibetan records, Odantapuri had about 12,000 disciples. This university also perished in the hands of Muslim invaders.

Somapura

Somapura is in East Pakistan. It is said that King Devapala (810-850 AD) built Dharmapala-Vihara in Somapura. The ruins of this building cover an area of approximately 1 square mile. There is a large door and a high wall that surrounds the building. In addition to the church and the temple, there are around 177 cells for monks. Among the ruins there is a common reflector and a kitchen. It is worth seeing the remains of the three -story building. The university flourished for about 750 years before it was abandoned after the Muslim invasion.

Jagadala

King Ramapal (1077-1129) is considered to be the founder of this university. Jagadala University is the largest construction project performed by Pala Kings. It is a center for studying and spreading tantric Buddhism. He followed the methods, practices and traditions of Laland. According to Tibetan Works, Jagaddal has translated many books into Tibetan. Buddhist teacher SakyaSykoBhadra entered Jagaddal to study after a Muslim invasion to see Laland, Vikramshila and Odantapuri in the ruins. His student Danaseel is said to have translated ten books into Tibetan. Sakya Sri Bhadra is responsible for the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. He lived in Jagaddal for seven years. In 1027, Muslim attackers fired and destroyed Jagaddal.

Vallbhi

The University of Vallebbhi settled in Saurashtra, current Gujarat, around the seventh century and flourished for 600 years until the twelfth century. Chinese traveller, who visited this university in the seventh century, described it as a great learning center. It is said that two famous Buddhist scholars, Gunamati and Sthiramati, graduated from the university. This university became famous for their studies in secular subjects and students from all over the country came to study at this university.

The graduates of this university receive high positions due to their high level of education.

CONCLUSION

Buddhist monasteries in antiquity and Buddhist universities in later periods played an important role in the development of Buddhist education. Integrating Buddhist principles into the Indian educational framework provides profound opportunities for learners to develop and foster holistic wisdom. Emphasizing values such as compassion, consideration, and reciprocity, this approach not only improves academic performance, but also equips students with the ability to navigate the complexities of modern life with resilience and empathy. We will develop people who as we reflect on the rich tradition of Buddhism in India, we recognize its enduring relevance in shaping modern education. By fostering an environment that fosters critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and social responsibility, we prepare our students to become compassionate leaders and agents of positive change in their communities. As we move forward, it is imperative that we continue to explore innovative ways to incorporate Buddhist principles into educational curricula and ensure that Buddhist principles remain accessible and inclusive to learners of all backgrounds. By doing so, we honor the legacy of Buddhism in India and pave the way for a brighter and brighter future for generations to come.

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